


THE



# McALL MISSION

## IN FRANCE.


 Quarterly Record

EDITED BY

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## INTRODUCTORY.



AFTER waiting for long, but in vain, the Editor has suddenly received so many interesting contributions from his fellow-workers, that he must necessarily abridge his Introductory. In accordance with a decision of the Committee of Direction, the *Mission Quarterly* will henceforth appear thrice a year: in January, May, and October. This decision was reached too late to allow of a number being published last January, but measures have been

taken to secure its punctual appearance henceforth. It is also intended that pictures of scenes or places of interest to the supporters of the work, and new French hymns with music, should be added from time to time to the purely literary contents. The form also of our paper may be altered to allow of its being more conveniently bound up with the Annual Report, appearing in the end of February or beginning of March.

Circumstances led various private friends to make an effort during the terrible winter that has only just left us, to distribute soup to the starving work-people and their families, in one after another of our Paris halls. The Y.M.C.A. led the way, and indeed, all through, the more active members of their Committee bore the brunt of both the expense and the labour; but money came in from all sides unsolicited, and on a rough calculation, from the beginning of December to the end of March, at least two distributions per week must have been made in our Halls, the number of guests varying from two to six or seven hundred. We had hoped to be able to consecrate an entire article, with a picture, to this most interesting side-effort in the general work of evangelisation, and perhaps we may return to it in our next number, but for the present this brief allusion must suffice.

Throughout the winter, regular monthly meetings have been held of our Sunday-school teachers, which have had an excellent effect in drawing us closer together. The special effort made recently in one of our schools to bring our scholars to decision is well commented on in the interesting article by Monsieur de Rougemont, the eager student so well known a few years ago in the Universities of Oxford and Edinburgh. The same friend, with the help and partly under the patronage of Miss Howard, inaugurated and carried through, with a fair measure of success, a series of special weekly *conferences* for students, some of which attracted large audiences. The results of all these efforts are carefully noted by the respective sub-committees of the Mission, and will form the basis for new operations to be set on foot with the commencement of next winter season.

In connection with the ever-interesting question of results, it may not be out of place to state that one single church in Paris gained, this Easter, eight new adult members from one of our halls; and that of the catechumens confirmed at the same time, ten per cent. owed it to the children's meeting of the same

hall that they had sought at all the religious help of the pastors. And observe, this statement is limited to one period of reception, and to one hall. I happen to know both of several others, adults and children, drawn at other times from that hall to that church, and of at least one woman converted in another hall who joined that same church this Easter. Nor is it out of place to mention that our zealous evangelist at Ajaccio, whose graphic account of his work in that city will be found further on, is himself a convert of the Mission in Paris, as are also his wife and sister-in-law. Place these facts, and those furnished by Pastor Kissel, alongside of the refusal of a certain Consistoire in the Departments, to allow the converts of our Mission Halls to join the Protestant Church, and you will obtain, dear reader, fruit for not a little profitable reflection.

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### The Best New Year's Gifts.

I have collected from the lips of our fellow-workers the following incidents dating with this New Year, and which they significantly styled "the most precious New Year's gifts" they had received. What, indeed, could be so reviving to the heart of a Christian labourer as to be permitted to know that souls had been given as the reward of faithful effort !

Some months ago in one of our mission rooms in a very dark and demoralised part of Paris, our esteemed colleague, a French layman, who voluntarily takes charge of the station, and our indefatigable lady Bible-reader who aids him, remarked in the meeting a man never seen there before. He proved to be unknown to all present. His aspect was gloomy and unprepossessing ; he hung down his head, and never met the speaker's glance. At the close he seemed to resent the effort of our two friends to speak a kind word to him. They felt persuaded that they should see him no more ; but he returned, and became a constant attendant. His demeanour was always the same, only that on several occasions when Christ's love in dying for the chief of sinners was specially emphasised, he would, for a minute, raise his head, and fix his eyes on the speaker. At last he consented to enter into conversation, and it became evident that a work of the Divine Spirit was commencing. Our friends ascertained that he was a French-speaking American, a man who had been in a better position but who had given himself to a reckless career, had left his wife and home, and come to Paris, a desolate outcast. After a long

struggle with dark and despairing views of his past life, he sought and found Divine forgiveness. Near the close of last year his wife wrote from America as follows:—"My husband by his evil conduct has been separated from me, but he writes me that by your instrumentality his heart has been changed," &c., &c. He had to leave Paris in order to return to his home. At parting he said, "Can I take with me my New Testament (in which he followed the Scripture reading during the meeting) and the hymn-book in remembrance of these meetings, in which I have got such a blessing?" Here are some words translated from his own letter, written from America, which the esteemed director of the station received at the New Year:—"May the Divine blessing rest on you and on your family! I was plunged in the gulf and you have extricated me. I have read over and over again the words of Jesus, 'Come unto Me all ye that labour,' &c. I have come to Him. My suffering was dreadful, the burden was extreme. That suffering has passed away, that burden has ceased to exist. It is indeed an 'easy yoke.' I find in it the possession of profound peace, and an eternal hope in the promise of Christ."

Thus the Spirit of God rendered effectual the words of our French preacher to the French-speaking American stranger.

Here is another case, regarded by the friend who reports it, as also a "precious New Year's gift." The New Year brought him the following letter:—"On 29th December, you asked, 'Are there not some here who wish to return thanks to God for mercies received during the year which is closing?' Dear minister of the Gospel, out of gratitude for the grace God has given me, thanks to your earnest words in the mission room at —, I make this acknowledgment." The writer goes on to describe her past careless and unhappy life. So far had she gone in neglect of all religion that she had become a solitary being, "without hope in the world." At last, wearied of existence, she left her poor lodging, resolved to put an end to her own life. It was a bleak evening, the rain fell in torrents, she was compelled to seek shelter. Observing a large doorway open, with light gleaming from within, she entered. The place was wholly strange to her, and all she heard spoken there came to her as a new discovery. The text was, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, &c." As the result of the simple presentation of a Saviour's love, she abandoned her dark purpose, became a regular attendant of the meeting, entered into conversation with our colleague, and, in the issue,

obtained peace in believing. These are her own expressions, translated from the New Year's letter: "Can I ever forget your words, 'God is infinitely good, always ready to forgive the sinner, however great or numerous the sins may have been?' I prayed, when you prayed at the close of the meeting; I, who had never prayed before. Returned to my lodging, I fell on my knees, and asked God's pardoning mercy." As a comment on this case, our colleague inscribes the words, "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?"

About the same period, in another station, the same friend preached from the text, suggested by the closing year, "How old art thou?" When the meeting closed, one of the regular hearers came to him and asked, naively, "Sir, how old do you suppose me to be?" He declared his inability to estimate. Then she said earnestly, "My age is exactly one hour. When you put that close question to us, I felt that I, so to speak, was not yet born; and in that moment, thanks to God, I began to live, for I was enabled to give my heart to the Saviour."

R. W. McALL.

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### La Rue Royale.

The *rue Royale* Station gives us much encouragement. Since our removal to the new place, the audiences have had a tendency to increase; last Sunday afternoon for instance (Easter Sunday) the hall was crowded. The week-night meetings also are better attended than they were in the *rue St. Honoré*, especially on the Wednesday, when a little choir sings choice pieces. The effect of this is wonderful; the attendance, on the night of the choir, being double that of the other days, showing that sacred music is the strongest power of attraction which can be used for outsiders.

But, thank God, all our listeners are not outsiders. A large number may be considered as having truly given themselves to Christ. The *Société fraternelle* which meets here every second Wednesday, is well attended, and the meetings are bright and lively. There are about fifty names on the rolls, the number of attendances being about the same (a good many people like to attend the *Société fraternelle*, though they do not belong to it).

Our audience is very varied here; from the higher class to the lowest, all ranks of society are represented, the average being the well-to-do, middle class Parisians.

Among our brightest friends, is a little woman, about forty



years of age, a Waldensian by birth. Though a Protestant, and an attendant of religious services, she did not care much for her soul, and was a mere formalist; her husband, who is employed in one of the largest Paris hotels, was entirely indifferent to religion. But now both have been converted. The wife was the first to come to Christ; and she showed such a change in her life, that the husband marvelled at it, and soon followed her example. "Before I was converted," she says, "we had to support my husband's mother, in our country, by sending her from time to time little sums of money. I used to grumble at this very much, and bitterly reproached my husband for it. It seemed hard to deprive myself of my earnings to send them to the old woman. How ashamed I feel now! When I understood the love of God to me, I felt I could never love enough those whom He had intrusted to my care, and I took the initiative in sending larger sums than before to my mother-in-law. I begged the forgiveness of my husband for having been so cross before; he was touched, and said, 'Well, now, I see some good in your meetings.' He came to them, he took to his Bible again, we prayed together, and he, too, is converted now." The little woman, though in a bad state of health, is very active; she visits the sick, and tries to work for the Master in every possible way.

Our Sunday afternoon meetings are very regularly attended by a young man and his mother, who belong to the Gallican Church (Father Hyacinthe). He is a very remarkable and very rare type of intelligent, pious Catholic youth. In many things, and especially in zeal for the service of God, he outdoes many Christian Protestants, and it is cheering to see, that, though he follows us not, yet he is serving the same Master as we. Oh, that France had many such young men!

Another of our regular attendants is a Greek, belonging to the Greek Church. He never misses one meeting. I believe he has given his heart to Christ. His devotion is profound, and he also is trying to do something to spread the knowledge of Christ around him.

These examples show what a variety of types we have in our meetings, and what a concentrating power the Gospel is, which unites together, day after day, in the same communion, the Protestant, and the Waldensian, and the Greek, and the Gallican, and even the Roman Catholic. No other magnet, but the cross of Christ, could accomplish such a miracle as this.

R. SAILLENS.

## Our Schools.

## A TEACHER'S IMPRESSION.

Three years ago I was called back from St. Etienne to replace in his office the Rev. Ch. E. Greig, Director of M. McAll's Mission schools in Paris. It is a great pleasure for me to record, now that I have been engaged during this winter in the same field of work, the distinct progress realised since that time. Having revisited the very same *Salles Populaires* in which I then so often met our pupils, I saw at a glance the changes that had taken place amongst the children, of whom many were well known to me, and I may as well point out several improvements which seem to me to have been introduced in the general organisation of the work. The children are certainly more earnest than they were, and several are showing so much reverence to the Gospel that it proves a real and deep Christian feeling. The attendance at the schools is larger; the classes are accustomed to a firmer discipline; the staff of teachers, partly composed of grown-up pupils, is better instructed and more conscientious; the methods of preparing our helpers and of teaching the classes—though the same are better adapted to the ground we have to clear—and the great care taken of the most advanced, brings more life and light to all. Also, the whole missionary system takes now a shape, and is carried patiently forward by a Committee, who labour to obviate the daily difficulties of an increasing work, and try at the same time to introduce uniformity and method into the teaching of our numerous classes, and to harmonise the various forces the Mission has already secured. It is therefore certain that we are much in advance of the situation I had often deplored three years ago; the time elapsed has brought a great improvement in more than one direction.

Let us look in on the Five o'clock Children's Meeting of the Faubourg St. Antoine. Every Wednesday during this winter about 300 children, accustomed to live without any control in the street, rushed in as soon as the door was opened to them. A lady plays the organ, and one or two others keep order, but the Director is alone to give the lesson. How is he going to master such a difficult audience? When every child has taken his place, the bigger ones helping the babies they drag everywhere after them, a stroke or two of the little bell reduces to silence the troop of chatterboxes, and sets them

singing, with the whole force of their lungs, a hymn of five or six verses. If this first musical effort has not exhausted the superabundant energy of these youngsters, anxious to take an active part in the service, a second hymn will satisfy them. Slightly exhausted by the heartiness of their singing, this youthful audience is ready now to listen to you. The child sitting at the end of the bench has gathered together the hymn-books, and placed them carefully in a small portfolio made for the purpose, and there will be perfect silence when their friend, the Director, introduces the lesson, and questions them on that of the previous week. He will, perhaps, have to stop once or twice to tell some new comer that he must have a little more respect for our habits of order, or to send away some chatterbox; but he will manage, without too much difficulty, to fix the attention of the children for a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes, thanks to the illustrations he draws on the blackboard, or to the slightly dramatic turn he gives to the Bible story of the day. Then another hymn and the prayer leaves the rest of the hour for the repetition of a text, the teaching of another, the calling of the roll, distribution of *bons points*, and the adjudication of *récompenses* to the more regular attendants.

If you return on Sunday, you will see a different sight. About twenty teachers have each their own class, so that there is no difficulty as regards discipline, and the progress is much more satisfactory. The answers given by the children at the general questioning, prove that many have profited by the half-hour spent with their teacher, and are prepared to gather up the conclusions and applications, which are being written down on the blackboard. Besides, all the older ones have their Bibles gained by regular attendance. Far from looking upon it as an ordinary school-manual, these young minds, as ready to be fired with enthusiasm as to be wearied by inanity, love to consult it, and—supernatural attraction of the divine book!—it becomes for many of them their inseparable companion, morning and night. Oh, how many children brought up in our churches and trained by pious parents, would need to learn from these poor gamins of the faubourgs to read the prophets and the gospels with reflection and intelligence! Nor must we forget to mention, when treating of our Ragged Schools, the unmistakable progress obtained in the purely external matter of cleanliness.

In many parts of the city where I have been working



this winter, these results are far from having been yet seen, but so soon as certain schools assume the encouraging aspect of which I have been speaking, it is permissible to point to them as proof of what can be obtained in Paris by perseverance.

Now to express scientifically in one word the characteristics of the whole work amongst the children here, I will call it a selection at once natural and supernatural. Many are called to hear the Gospel; the best only remain with us. The seed of life may assuredly be hidden for many years in some young hearts who came in and left us, indifferent in appearance, though touched perhaps in reality by the Word of God; but if we cannot be sure of observing rightly the work of the Spirit, and the secret evolution of mind and character, so far at least as the organisation of the Mission is concerned, we can regulate its action in accordance with the law of natural selection. For instance, those whose zeal is strong enough to survive the hot days of summer, are entirely won for us; the temptations of the bright days have done the work of selection without any interference from us. On the other hand, when winter brings within our doors the whole set of children off the streets, we have to be very firm with these boys accustomed to scoff at religion, and looking at a meeting as made to be disturbed; we discourage the worst from remaining by refusing to take down their names before they have obtained ten *bons points* and learned to behave properly, and are even obliged to drop the name of a child from the roll as soon as he ceases to attend the meeting regularly. To this necessary severity we add a system of rewards for the deserving; tracts, leaflets, periodicals for the young, Bibles, and Testaments, which induce many to follow our meetings without hardly ever missing one. Those who lack affection and sympathy soon meet with it from one or another teacher; they can even become members of the Bible Union, and a great friendship arises very soon between the young boys or girls thus gathered together and the secretary of the Union. By this means we keep our schools from the contagion of evil, and many intelligent and even wild natures are attracted by our methods and changed by the Lord's Spirit.

We had recently a series of three consecutive evenings given to the most advanced and better disposed children of St. Antoine, during which they were invited to consecrate more completely their lives to Christ according to the Gospel. To

our very great joy, we saw at once the good effects of this attempt. Solemn, though simple addresses were made to them, pointed anecdotes conveyed at once to their minds the thoughts of the speakers, and we feel convinced that the pleadings of the Spirit whose presence we seemed to feel distinctly amongst us, were not rejected by our youthful friends.

Of this work, then, it may very specially be said that they who share in it are fortunate, for to them it is given in a remarkable degree to "rejoice in their own works," to see as well as look forward to the fruits of their labour in the Lord.

ARTHUR DE ROUGEMONT.

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### The Gospel in Brittany.

DEAR FRIENDS,—This has been a good winter for our *Réunions Populaires*. Our hall at Carnel has been especially successful. You remember, perhaps, that I complained last summer of having few people in that quarter; my wife, alas! was suffering from a severe illness, she had to pass the summer at the seaside, and our work, especially in that place, suffered along with her. Since then, God be thanked, my dear wife's health has much improved. We have returned to Lorient, resumed our work, and, above all, had the delight of receiving from the Lord a well-qualified Bible-woman, our dear Madame Bisson, to whose zeal and religious influence I attribute, in large measure, this new and increasing success. Oh, how much we deserve blame for not being more faithful! Here is this poor woman, without much education, knowing only her Bible, but that thoroughly, without other talent than her love of souls and her piety, who sets herself to visit the families, speaks to them of the Gospel, reads the Word of God at the pillow of the sick, comforts the sorrowing, does, in short, exactly what half our Christians, especially our Christian women, might and ought to do to a large extent at least, and because this one humble Christian woman arrived suddenly and set herself to work, a new life seems immediately to spread through the church, to communicate a new warmth and energy to all the members, and to rouse even the most indifferent. What would be the result then, if each one of us, apart from his official position, felt his responsibility as a Christian, and sought in good earnest to consecrate to the Lord's service the gifts which he had received, however humble they might be! It is high

time that the so-called *faithful* of our flocks\* should listen penitently to the Master's just reproach, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

And the Gospel is so perfectly adapted, now as then, to our soul's needs; it answers so admirably to our miseries and our aspirations! The other day our Bible-woman, Mme. Bisson, told me a curious and touching story. She was visiting one of our most regular and most interesting hearers at Carnel, Madame J. "Ah," said she, "after two or three times I was very near never coming back. All that that gentleman said suited me so exactly, he described so vividly all my most secret sorrows and needs, that I was quite ashamed and angry into the bargain. What business has that man, I exclaimed, to come prying in that fashion into my family life, and into my secret thoughts, and then to go and talk about them before all the world! I even stayed away one or two Fridays. However, I reflected that the gentleman did not know me, that he had never been in my house, that he had never even spoken to me, and then I understood that the one who knew me so well was not he but the Lord. So I went back to the meetings. I heard there, more and more distinctly, the voice of God, and I have got there a great deal of good." Is it not interesting, this poor woman, who, like Nathanael, suddenly brought into the presence of the Saviour, is astonished, draws back almost, crying "Whence knowest Thou me?"

And many others, I hope, whose stories have not reached us, have felt themselves understood, loved by the Lord in these quiet little meetings, and have conceived a longing desire to turn to Him. In any case things look very encouraging. At Kerentrech as well as at Carnel we have always large audiences, and several families from both places have taken to following us to church, where the congregation has been greatly increased, two-thirds or more of our regular attendants being proselytes from catholicism.

Now that I have no longer to take charge of Quimper, and have in this way my Sunday evenings free, I am thinking of opening a third hall, probably at Kériado. I shall have more to say to you shortly about this project.

Thanks, dear friends of the Mission, for the interest you show us, and for the generous sacrifices that you make on our behalf. May the Lord Himself discharge our debt of gratitude in blessing you more and more in your persons and in your work!—Yours most sincerely,

C. G. KISSEL.

\* In France the members of a congregation are called "les fidèles."

Allow me to remind you that one of our most precious agencies is the distribution of books by our Bible-woman from house to house, which enables her to form and to maintain relations with quite a number of families. Unfortunately our little library is so small and so poor! If you could get us some works—travels, religious story-books, &c., anything popular and interesting—we should be most warmly grateful.

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### Ajaccio.

Ajaccio is a town of 18,000 or 19,000 inhabitants, and becomes every winter the resort of a number of tourists and invalids,—German, English, Danish, Swiss, and Russian. The resident population, as is the case with almost all sea-ports, is largely composed of people without any regular occupation, whose consciences are difficult to awake, and who seem to have lost all moral sense through the abuse of strong drink and the orgies of all kinds to which they give themselves up. Hence the Ajacciens are regarded by the police as the most corrupt of all the inhabitants of Corsica, uniting with an exaggerated fanaticism the most revolting immorality.

It is not then surprising that the work of evangelisation should have encountered from the outset peculiar difficulties in Ajaccio. The mere choice of a hall was embarrassing, nothing being available but an old shop, much too small for the crowds which, as they poured in and out, often filled its seventy-five chairs two or three times over in the course of one meeting. The very first evening the place was literally taken by assault by a band of 200 young men, whom, by great exertions of authority, we overawed inside, but were powerless to resist in the open street. Mud, stones, squibs, &c., were thrown at us, and we expected every instant that the door, which we kept shut by main force, would be burst open under the blows which were rained upon it. The police, unable to defend us, had to appeal to the gendarmerie for help, and send us home under an armed escort. One evening the man who was keeping the door was threatened with a knife; and in the streets, even in broad daylight, we were greeted with insults, stones were thrown at us, and once even a large earthen pot, just missing us, was smashed to pieces at our feet. Upon that we thought it well to get inserted in the newspapers of the town a paragraph explaining who we were, what was the object of the Mission, and what



results had already been obtained by its means in France. We also required all who wished to attend to apply for tickets; and gradually by the distribution of tracts, by private conversations, and by visits, we succeeded in calming the excitement. Our warm thanks are due to Pastor Meystre of Lausanne,\* who courageously stood beside us during all this period of conflict.

We now thought of exhibiting in our windows Bibles and Testaments in various languages, and of opening a circulating library, for which Madame Dalencourt and the Toulouse Society furnished us with the books. The next step was to establish a French service, partly for the inhabitants of the town, partly for the numerous strangers who had been filling our hotels for some days, and who were entirely without religious privileges; the only church in the island being the beautiful little English chapel, where the service is only held in English and for English. With the help of some generous friends we hired a salon, where the Gospel was preached every Sunday by M. Meystre or by myself.

The children's meeting is held on Thursday at three o'clock, under the direction of my sister-in-law, and often has an attendance of over eighty. We visit the children in their homes, and are everywhere well received. The Christmas *fête*, when we gathered 300 persons in a large hall hired for the occasion, showed us that all who know us are well-disposed towards us now, at least except those who are directly under the influence of the priests. These often try to frighten the children from coming, and one day, when we were coming out from school, a little girl came running up to us, and held out to us, pale and trembling, the New Testament which she had just received in exchange for her *bons points*. After a great deal of questioning, my sister-in-law discovered that some one had told the child to bring the book back to us, for if she kept it she would be damned. Several priests were prowling round, and there was no mistaking who had frightened the child.

We have tried every possible means of establishing a meeting for mothers, but unsuccessfully. After having in vain invited them and waited for them, my wife visited them in their own homes, and obtained in this way a hasty visit from some women who would have liked to come but did not dare to do so, fearing that they would be spied on and reported by their neighbours. Once, however, there were twelve, but that did not last, and

\* Want of space obliges us to omit an interesting letter from Pastor Meystre regarding the work in Ajaccio.



we had to begin again to hunt them up. The women of the working classes are almost inaccessible in Corsica, they cannot believe that the meetings are intended for them, accustomed as they are to be looked upon as mere servants. Much effort and courage will be needed to raise the Corsican women, put them in their right place, and above all make known to them that Gospel which they always think good for their husbands but not for themselves. However, some of them come regularly now to our evening meetings.

Let me give you now two little anecdotes, whose truth we can absolutely guarantee, and which will show you the Corsican character, and at the same time the great need the country has of the Gospel. A young man whom we knew, hurried into the hall one evening, a little before the meeting began, in a state of great excitement. He had just wounded with four strokes of his poignard, a man with whom he had had a quarrel during the night. We tried to make him reflect on what he had done, prayed with him, and took him home to our house, when he committed his dagger to our charge that he might not be again tempted to use it, receiving in return a copy of the New Testament. Seven months before, this man's brother had fallen victim to a cowardly assassin, who, posting himself where he knew the other should pass, had shot him dead on the spot; then having accomplished this feat, for a Corsican the most natural in the world, had torn the heart from his enemy's body, and rubbed his boots with it in the presence of witnesses. And all that for a reason that was simply ridiculous. The young man is now a soldier, and we hope will become also a soldier of Christ.

Another older man was charged by the police with having cut off, with a pistol-shot, two fingers from the hand of a neighbour who was aiming at him. (Every one here carries his gun loaded, although the hunting season is over.) This man came to my house one evening to ask me to write for him to his advocate, and got from me a Testament and some tracts.

After having spoken to you of the difficulties and the encouragements which we have met with in pursuing the Lord's work in Ajaccio, I cannot close this long letter without telling you what are our most pressing needs, that our friends may make of them a subject of prayer, and may know in what way to come to our help. 1. We must have a larger hall, capable of seating the crowds which come to us to hear the

Gospel, and the half of whom, to our great regret, we have to send away every night. We could then also set a-foot our Soldiers' Reading Room, which succeeded so admirably last year at St. Etienne. 2. We cannot be indifferent to the ravages wrought by the fevers of the country during eight months of the year. We suffer from them ourselves, our friends ask us what they should do, and sometimes one is forced to furnish medicines to those who cannot afford to buy them. We should require a small stock of quinine, and also the means of preparing a simple remedy whose value my father has often proved as a preservative from malarial fevers in Corsica, Sardinia, and Rome. But what we chiefly ask of our friends, is to remember sometimes before the Lord the little Island of Corsica, and the missionaries who work there.

E. MABBOUX.

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### Soldiers' Reading Room at Marseilles.

The year 1886 found us in the midst of our preparations for our New Year's Fete of the 3rd January. Alsace, whose patriotism is still full of life, furnished the greater part of the entertainment; the remainder of the expenses was defrayed by English friends. Thanks to these gifts, our 300 soldiers could receive each a copy of the New Testament, besides special presents prepared beforehand for them, not to speak of a collation of coffee and cake. The addresses were short and good, and produced an excellent impression. We were specially happy to have among us our dear young friend, Mr. Gordon, nephew of the *grand martyr anglais*, whose presence alone was as good as a speech. But the event which has left the most vivid impression was the visit of M. Saillens; I still discover every day traces of its influence. Among other things a certain worthy soldier, after hearing the beautiful hymns which were sung that evening, has since spent all his evenings in copying the entire collection. His self-imposed task has already cost him nearly three months' work, but he does not seem tired of it yet. Another of our most assiduous attendants said, after having heard M. Saillens speak, "That goes to the bottom of one's heart, that does."

Last week, while M. Sautter, who had looked in on us, was urging the young men to think seriously of God, and of His love for them in Christ, I surprised tears in the eyes of one of

them, and many other incidents show that work is going on in their hearts. A dear musician, who has come to our room regularly for at least two years, asked me what he should do to make himself Protestant. I replied that the first thing to do was to study the Word of God in order to become *Christian*, for that it was impossible to protest against error before one knew the truth. Since then I have seen, by the questions which he asks me from time to time, that my advice has been followed, and that the Word of God is being studied. The Sunday evening Bible Class is becoming very interesting also; not only do those who come to it listen attentively, but they are taking to speak themselves, asking questions or answering them, so that we might call our meeting rather a friendly talk over the Bible.

This past week, also, we have managed to gather up some precious crumbs of the banquet which had been prepared for the church of Marseilles. I refer to the revival meetings which have just been held. Our soldiers were not forgotten. MM. Babut, Houter, and Sainton visited our reading-room, and spoke to the men; but the visit which made, I think, the deepest impression was that of M. Fermaud, of Geneva. It was natural that it should; his position as officer in the Swiss army gave a certain weight to his words; and I could easily see that the men were not only listening, but appropriating.

And now, must I close with a few figures? They are sufficiently imposing this year, for our numbers have almost doubled; the average has been 100 present each evening, and even during the three winter months it was 150, except on Sunday, when we never have more than 60. Naturally, therefore, our needs are much in excess of our resources, for our library is far from sufficing the number of readers, and our hall itself would be the better of some additions to its comfort—we have not room enough in winter, our chairs would need to be renewed, &c. But I am far from wishing to complain; on the contrary, I am only too thankful that the hall is too small, and our old chairs not numerous enough. May God always make it so, and may we never have to complain that we have a huge hall only half-filled.

H. STAHLCKER.